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# Harris Family Papers (MSS 100)

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Manuscripts & Folklife Archives  
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 Department of Library Special Collections  
 Western Kentucky University  
 Bowling Green, KY 42101

*Descriptive Inventory*

**MSS 100 HARRIS Family Papers**

5 boxes. 40 folders. 821 items. 1885-1934. Originals, photocopies, photographs.

1996.125.2; 1997.69.6

**BIOGRAPHY**

George Calvin Harris (1840-1928) was the son of Nathaniel Knight Harris (1811-1874) and Drucilla Cooper (Johnson) Harris. He married Amanda Jane Downey (1843-1925) in 1870. They lived in Franklin, Kentucky. George was a graduate of the University of Michigan, and later practiced law in Simpson County. He served as circuit court judge, was Simpson County's elected representative to the 1890 Kentucky Constitutional Convention, and acted as chairman of trustees for the Franklin Female College. George and Amanda Harris's children were Cortlandt Cooper (1872-1948), Downey Lamar (1875-1956), George DeWitt (1876-1918), Drucilla Jane, known as "Jane" (1878-1952), Stella Dorinda (1881-1958), and Lucy Josephine (1884-1977). The Harrises were active members of the Presbyterian Church in Franklin.

Cortlandt Harris became a successful businessman in St. Louis, Missouri and Buffalo, New York, and was among the founders of the St. Louis Zoo. He married Alma Louise Kregel in 1905.

Downey Harris attended the University of Michigan and did post-graduate work in Berlin in 1905. He was a St. Louis pathologist and is said to have developed a vaccine for rabies. Upon Downey's death, his papers were donated to Washington University in St. Louis. During World War I, he served as a physician at Camp Lee near Petersburg, Virginia.

On 17 December 1902, Jane Harris married Newton Turner Short, known as "Turner" (1874-1915), a Giles County, Tennessee merchant and the son of James B. Short and Florence Buford. They became the parents of a daughter, Josephine Harris Short (1912-2000), who married Thomas Raymond Moody. Around the time of his daughter's birth, one of Turner's eyes, afflicted with a small growth, was removed. On 5 April 1915, when Josephine was only three, Turner died of cancer in St. Louis, Missouri. He was buried in Franklin, Kentucky.

Another much-mourned death in the family was that of Jane's brother, George D. Harris. Like Downey, he attended the University of Michigan, and upon graduation began practicing law in St. Louis. He entered the U.S. Army in 1917 and trained at Fort Sheridan, outside of Chicago, Illinois. Commissioned as a second lieutenant in Battery A of the 120th Field Artillery, George was sent to France in December 1917. He was

severely wounded in battle near Epinonville, France on 7 October 1918 and died on 13 October 1918. His family collected information about his death from comrades and French citizens. In 1921, George's body was brought home for burial in the family cemetery plot in Franklin.

Stella Dorinda Harris was an active leader in the Franklin Presbyterian Church. Lucy Josephine Harris was an amateur historian and an avid antique collector in Franklin.

## **COLLECTION**

The first half of this collection (Boxes 1-3) consists chiefly of letters dating from 1885 to 1925, with the bulk of them written during World War I by two brothers, George D. and Downey L. Harris, to their parents George C. and Amanda J. Harris and their three sisters, Jane, Lucy, and Stella, in Franklin, Kentucky. The letters from George D. discuss his military training at Fort Sheridan and his military service in France. The World War I letters from Downey are sent from Camp Lee in Petersburg, Virginia, and relate to his service as a physician. Pre-World War I letters from both brothers to their family in Franklin are also included in the collection, including 25 letters from Downey to his family while he was studying in 1905 in Berlin, Germany. They chiefly describe his travels in Europe. In addition, the collection contains the travel letters of George D. Harris while on a trip to Europe in 1914. They describe his travels and his difficulty in getting back to the United States due to the advent of World War I. The collection also contains letters written by and received by George C. and Amanda J. Harris during the Kentucky Constitutional Convention of 1890, and a few letters written by their first son, Cortlandt.

A subsequent addition to this collection (Boxes 4-5) consists mostly of letters dating from 1895 to 1934. Almost all the letters are between Harris family members; in several cases one has written at the end or on the back of another's letter and sent it on to a third.

Box 4 contains mostly correspondence of George C. and Amanda J. Harris and their children. Both parents write to daughter Jane about the return of her brother George's body from overseas in 1921 (Folders 1, 2); George C. offers comments on 1920s Los Angeles, where Jane and her daughter Josephine were living (Folder 1). Of interest is a letter to Amanda J. from a nephew, Samuel J. Downey, introducing his fiancée Pauline Barnett and commenting on the prevalence of the Ku Klux Klan (which he supports) in Texas, and a letter from a niece, "Bess," comparing the culture of the South to that in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, where she is working (Folder 2). In an 1895 letter to his sister Jane (Folder 6), Downey Harris offers brotherly advice about the young men of Franklin, comparing one apparent suitor to the egotistical James Steerforth in *David Copperfield*; later, he gives a positive forecast about the health of her husband, Newton Turner Short, after he has his eye removed. In letters mostly to her sister Jane (Folder 8), Stella Harris shows great solicitude for her niece Josephine, and also writes of Amanda J. Harris's final illness and death. Jane Short writes to her husband Turner in St. Louis about their newborn daughter as he is recovering from surgery in 1912, and thereafter when she is away visiting her family; she also writes to brother George when the family reluctantly sees him off to military service (Folder 10). Jane's 1934 letters from Franklin, Kentucky to daughter Josephine in Michigan, where

she is spending the summer with her aunt Alma (Mrs. Cortlandt) Harris (Folder 11), report family news and are full of concern for Josephine's welfare.

Box 5 contains mostly correspondence of Jane (Harris) Short and Newton Turner Short. Of interest are courtship letters written to Jane from Washington, D. C. by Robert S. Collier of Franklin, Kentucky, prior to Jane's marriage to Turner (Folder 1). Miscellaneous letters to Jane include letters from other young men written before her marriage, congratulatory letters on her marriage and motherhood (Folder 2), and condolence letters on husband Turner's death (Folder 3). Jane's miscellaneous papers include a 1902 account from Bowling Green dressmaker Carrie (Mrs. A. H.) Taylor for several wedding garments (Folder 4). Newton Turner Short's letters (Folder 5) are to his wife and daughter; they include several written before his marriage, particularly in April 1902, when his general merchandise business suffered disastrous losses after a flood. He also writes from St. Louis in 1915, during treatment for his last illness. Letters to Turner Short (Folder 6) are mostly from family and friends at the time of his eye surgery and final illness. Turner's mother, Florence (Buford) Short, writes to him and Jane of family matters and her concern for his health; like Jane's sisters and parents, she and her son Buford write affectionate letters to young Josephine Short (Folder 7). A few miscellaneous papers (Folder 8) consist of a musical program, probably involving the children of Cortlandt Harris; a letter to one of the Harris daughters from a Frenchwoman, perhaps a former teacher; a blueprint of a gravestone for George C., Amanda J. and George D. Harris; and two unidentified photographs.

### ***SHELF LIST***

<b>BOX 1</b>	<b>Harris Family</b>	<b>1885-1918</b>	<b>237 items</b>
Folder 1	Inventory		2 items
Folder 2	George C. and Amanda D. Harris – Correspondence	1885-1918	24 items
Folder 3	George D. Harris – Correspondence related to European trip	1914	25 items
Folder 4	George D. Harris – Postcards from European trip	1914	104 items
Folder 5	George D. Harris – Miscellaneous promotional material and newspaper clippings related to European trip	1914	12 items
Folder 6	George D. Harris – Letters to his parents, George C. and Amanda D. Harris	1905-1916	13 items

Folder 7	George D. Harris – Letters to his parents, George C. and Amanda D. Harris	Feb.- Aug. 1917	8 items
Folder 8	George D. Harris – World War I letters to his parents, George C. and Amanda D. Harris	Sept.-Dec. 1917	22 items
Folder 9	George D. Harris – World War I letters to his parents, George C. and Amanda D. Harris	Jan.-Mar. 1918	15 items
Folder 10	George D. Harris – World War I letters to his parents, George C. and Amanda D. Harris	Apr.-May 1918	12 items
<b>BOX 2</b>	<b>Harris Family</b>	<b>1917-1922</b>	<b>182 items</b>
Folder 1	George D. Harris – World War I letters to his parents, George C. and Amanda D. Harris	Jun.-Oct. 1918	34 items
Folder 2	George D. Harris – World War I letters to family members and colleagues	1917-1918	13 items
Folder 3	George D. Harris – Postcards from World War I to his family in Franklin, Ky.	1917-1918	54 items
Folder 4	George D. Harris – World War I letter to Harris from Margaret Weaver and World War I photographs	1917-1918	12 items
Folder 5	George D. Harris – Letters, documents and memorials related to George D. Harris's death	1917-1922	50 items
Folder 6	Mary O'Connor Newell – Letters to George D. Harris and other Harris family members	1917-1920	15 items
Folder 7	Cortlandt C. Harris – Letters to family members in Franklin, Ky.	1894-1903	4 items

<b>BOX 3</b>	<b>Harris Family</b>	<b>1905-1925</b>	<b>84 items</b>
Folder 1	Downey L. Harris - Letters to family members in Franklin, Ky., while he was attending school in Berlin, Germany	1905	24 items
Folder 2	Downey L. Harris - Letters to family members in Franklin, Ky.	1905-1925	6 items
Folder 3	Downey L. Harris -- World War I letters to his family in Franklin, Ky.	1918	22 items
Folder 4	Downey L. Harris -- World War I letters to his family in Franklin, Ky.	1919	32 items
<b>BOX 4</b>	<b>Harris Family</b>	<b>1895-1934</b>	<b>207 items</b>
Folder 1	George C. Harris – Letters to Drucilla Jane (Harris) Short and family	1904-1927	26 items
Folder 2	Amanda D. Harris – Correspondence	1907-1923	29 items
Folder 3	Amanda D. Harris – Correspondence	1924-1925	28 items
Folder 4	Cortland C. Harris – Letters	1902-1925	11 items
Folder 5	Alma K. Harris – Letters	1912-1924	3 items
Folder 6	Downey L. Harris – Letters; clippings	1895-1926	27 items
Folder 7	George D. Harris – Letters	1902-1917	6 items
Folder 8	Stella D. Harris – Letters	1907-1926	19 items
Folder 9	Lucy J. Harris – Correspondence	1904-1925	12 items
Folder 10	Drucilla Jane (Harris) Short – Letters	1904-1917	24 items
Folder 11	Drucilla Jane (Harris) Short – Letters to Josephine Short	1934	22 items
<b>BOX 5</b>	<b>Harris Family</b>	<b>1898-1934</b>	<b>111 items</b>

Folder 1	Robert S. Collier – Letters to Drucilla Jane Harris	1899-1900	20 items
Folder 2	Drucilla Jane (Harris) Short – Miscellaneous letters to	1898-1934	20 items
Folder 3	Drucilla Jane (Harris) Short – Letters to, on illness and death of Newton Turner Short	1915	17 items
Folder 4	Drucilla Jane (Harris) Short – Miscellaneous papers	1902-1921, n.d.	3 items
Folder 5	Newton Turner Short – Letters to Drucilla Jane Short and Josephine Short	1901-1915	22 items
Folder 6	Newton Turner Short – Letters to	1902-1915	11 items
Folder 7	Florence (Buford) Short – Letters	1904-1920	13 items
Folder 8	Harris family – Miscellaneous papers and photo	1924-1925, n.d.	5 items

### ***OVERSIZED***

C1,D2,#15	George DeWitt Harris – Passport	1914	1 item
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### ***BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD***

MSS 100	HARRIS Family Papers	1885-1934
<p>Correspondence of the Harris family of Simpson County, Kentucky, primarily George Calvin Harris, wife Amanda J. Harris, their children Cortlandt C., Downey L., George D., Lucy J., Stella D. and Drucilla J. (Jane), and of Jane's husband, Newton Turner Short. Includes World War I letters sent to George C. and Amanda J. Harris by sons George and Downey Harris.</p> <p>5 boxes. 40 folders. 821 items. Originals, photocopies, photographs.</p> <p>1996.125.2; 1997.69.6</p>		

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### ***SEE and SEE ALSO***

Harris, Jane, 1878-1952

See:

Short, Drucilla Jane (Harris)

Short, Jane, 1878-1952

See:

Short, Drucilla Jane (Harris)

Short, Turner, 1874-1915

See:

Short, Newton Turner

Sunday, Billy, 1862-1935

See:

Sunday, William Ashley

Jeffrey 01/17/2013